

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 006903

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KSCA](#) [SOCI](#) [AMED](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [KUNR](#) [VE](#) [IS](#) [FR](#) [UNGA](#) [IRC](#)

SUBJECT: U/S DOBRIANSKY SEEKS COORDINATION WITH FRENCH
OFFICIALS ON DEMOCRACY PROMOTION, VENEZUELA, IPAPI AND MDA

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Karl Hofmann, Reasons 1.4b,d

1. (C) SUMMARY: U/S for Democracy and Global Affairs Dobriansky met with French MFA Director Jean-Maurice Ripert (IO A/S-equivalent) September 30 to discuss democracy promotion, the challenge in Venezuela, coordinated action against avian flu, and prospects for a solution on use of the Israeli MDA emblem. Ripert voiced concern that any campaign to promote democracy could interfere with actions at the UN and elsewhere to further codify human rights protections. He recommended the USG find a way to signal that democracy promotion was not a substitute for action on human rights. Ripert declared France had now earmarked a million euro for the UN Democracy Fund, but retained questions about its structure. On Venezuela, South America DAS-equivalent Pinard claimed the situation was less dire than usually portrayed and that the press was "completely free." U/S Dobriansky pressed the urgency of successfully launching the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) and received assurances that France would send representatives to the October 6-7 Senior Officials Meeting in Washington. On Magen David Adom (MDA) membership in the ICRC, PDAS-equivalent for Middle East/North Africa Bonnaud believed use of the Israeli emblem itself was less problematic than continuing negative developments on the ground. Ripert did not expect the Swiss to convene a conference on MDA this year. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) U/S Dobriansky met with French MFA IO A/S-equivalent Jean-Maurice Ripert on September 30 at a breakfast meeting hosted by DCM Hofmann. The French side also included IO PDAS-equivalent Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Human Rights Desk Officer Donatienne Hissard, South America DAS-equivalent Michel Pinard, Middle East/North Africa PDAS-equivalent Gilles Bonnaud, and MFA Health Counselor Frederic Dore. Political Counselor Rosenblatt, Science Counselor Robert Dry, Senior Adviser Nicole Bibbins Sedaca, and Poloff also attended.

Democracy Promotion

3. (C) Ripert stated that France, like the U.S, viewed democracy as the natural guarantor of human rights. Nonetheless Ripert worried that an actual campaign of democracy promotion might interfere with other efforts on advancing human rights, particularly in those countries where progress can be made on human rights but not necessarily on democracy in the short term. Moreover, reforming the Commission on Human Rights should be the first order of business, he said. Any campaign to promote democracy inevitably carried "political" freight, which could spark controversies to the detriment of what France viewed as the main objective -- promulgating universal legal instruments for the protection of human rights. "Democracy is of course good for human rights, but not on the same level," he opined.

4. (C) U/S Dobriansky countered with the example of democracy promotion in Afghanistan, where the drafting of a constitution had engaged actors from all sectors, especially women, in the protection of human rights. Where, she asked, would France envision advancing a human rights agenda independently of democracy promotion? China, suggested Quai d'Orsay Human Rights desk officer Donatienne Hissard. For Europeans, Hissard claimed, the focus should be on promoting rule of law, since democracy is achieved by increments. Noting there were cases of democracies failing to protect human rights, IO PDAS-equivalent Jean-Pierre Lacroix remarked that the European and American approaches might be diverging, with Ripert adding that the differences were not just tactical. Agreeing to a universal and legally binding instrument to safeguarding the rights of children, for instance, was a different goal than that of disseminating democratic principles. Ripert suggested there would be value in a message from the USG to the effect that democracy promotion did not conflict with the international human rights agenda. He proposed coordinating with Mali, the current president of the Community of Democracies (CD).

5. (C) France had now earmarked 1 million euro to the UN Democracy Fund, Ripert declared. He commented that France nonetheless had certain questions about the structure of the Fund, which must not be seen "to weaken the UN system."

(Note: Hissard told Poloff 9/29 there were concerns that the terms of reference inadequately take into account the role of UNDP and the Commission of Human Rights.) U/S Dobriansky stressed agreement with the arguments made by Ripert at the April 2005 meeting of the Community of Democracies in Santiago, Chile: i) the CD is not a substitute for the UN; ii) the CD operates as a complement to regional groupings in international organizations; iii) the UN Democracy Fund should not duplicate functions already in place elsewhere in the UN system. Ripert noted with surprise that a total of 146 nations actually qualified as democracies to participate in the CD.

Venezuela

16. (C) U/S Dobriansky replied that Venezuela posed a particular challenge as a democratically elected government that was increasingly undemocratic in its actions. Continuing, she urged support for NGOs in Venezuela seeking to speak out, greater coordination between EU and Latin American countries, and a freeze on sales of arms or aircraft. She expressed concern about prospective military aviation sales to the Chavez government and asked about the October 20-21 visit by Chavez to France. South America DAS-equivalent Michel Pinard, who served in Caracas from 1989-1993, was evasive on any French action. He argued that Venezuela was not as dire a situation as portrayed, since there was a "completely free" and very active press and no signs of repression by Chavez of the media. Pinard added that there were many opponents, too, but there was no coherent political opposition. He stressed the huge democratic support for Chavez, his surge in popularity since the 1992 coup and his subsequent election, reelection, and likely future reelection once again. "It is difficult to talk about resistance of civil society," Pinard said, and important to grasp that "Chavez is the symbol of the (historically) dominated people."

17. (C) Pinard described Chavez's persona as "surprising, unique probably in South America," distinct from that of Uribe, Kirchner, and Lula, "yet so far not crossing the boundary to dictatorship." There was political harassment, he admitted, yet there were also large and frequent demonstrations. Chavez nonetheless stood to benefit from some "discreet pedagogy" given "without aggression," he said. When pressed, he averred that France would offer such advice during Chavez's visit. Pinard suggested coordinating with other South and Latin American leaders, specifically Lula and Fox. Pinard did not address U/S Dobriansky's inquiry about possible military aviation sales. (Note: Pinard told PolCounselor he will meet with representatives of the Venezuelan NGO Sumate on October 18 in advance of the Chavez visit.)

Avian Flu

18. (SBU) U/S Dobriansky emphasized the need for coordinated action to address a possible avian flu pandemic. She welcomed France's involvement in the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI), stressing that its purpose was "to breathe life" into the WHO, FAO and OIE in order to obtain needed resources and enhance their ability to access countries vulnerable to a viral outbreak. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Washington October 6-7 would in no way supersede international organizations or other ongoing avian flu preparation activities. Nor did the U.S. plan, in sponsoring this partnership, to create additional structures of bureaucracies. She explained that the partnership's purpose should not be limited to human health alone, but needed also to address animal health. She noted that Canada planned to host a meeting of health ministers later in October and that the WHO would conduct a needs assessment in November to meet the challenge of a pandemic, efforts which could only be seen as complementary to IPAPI.

17. (SBU) Director Ripert responded that he knew FM Douste-Blazy's strong views on IPAPI. Douste-Blazy welcomed the partnership initiative and would send a delegation to Washington for the SOM. Although the composition of the delegation was not set, he expected it might include the interministerial coordinator on avian influenza preparedness, Dr. Didier Houssein. Ripert noted that France wants to see appropriate support for WHO and OIE. He said that France has already sent doctors and "is bringing" medical supplies to the WHO. In no way did France want to upset "the existing dynamics" of these international bodies. Ripert appreciated Dobriansky's assurances that the partnership would not create new bureaucracies. With regard to the SOM itself, Ripert said that France would not agree to any statements or declarations in advance of the meeting itself. Such

statements should reflect the actual discussions undertaken and the actions agreed, Ripert said.

MDA

18. (C) U/S Dobriansky noted possible signs of progress in resolving Magen David Adom membership in the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, specifically that the Palestinian Authority apparently may not oppose the 3rd Protocol. It was important to reinforce the Swiss position that the issue is humanitarian and not political, she said. PDAS-equivalent for Middle East/North Africa Bonnaud agreed with U/S Dobriansky that the Palestinian attitude was more generally "positive"; the deteriorating situation on the ground, not the emblem itself, was the greater obstacle to a solution. Ripert averred there was a continuing difficulty with the use of the MDA emblem without first a settlement of territorial disputes; the problem is the use of the MDA emblem in the context of an occupation. He doubted the Swiss would convene the proposed international conference on the issue at this time. He suggested a compromise might be possible to authorize use of the MDA emblem for 5 years in up to 5 different geographic locations.

Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>
STAPLETON